



# Town of Enfield Connecticut

Plan of Conservation & Development  
January 2010



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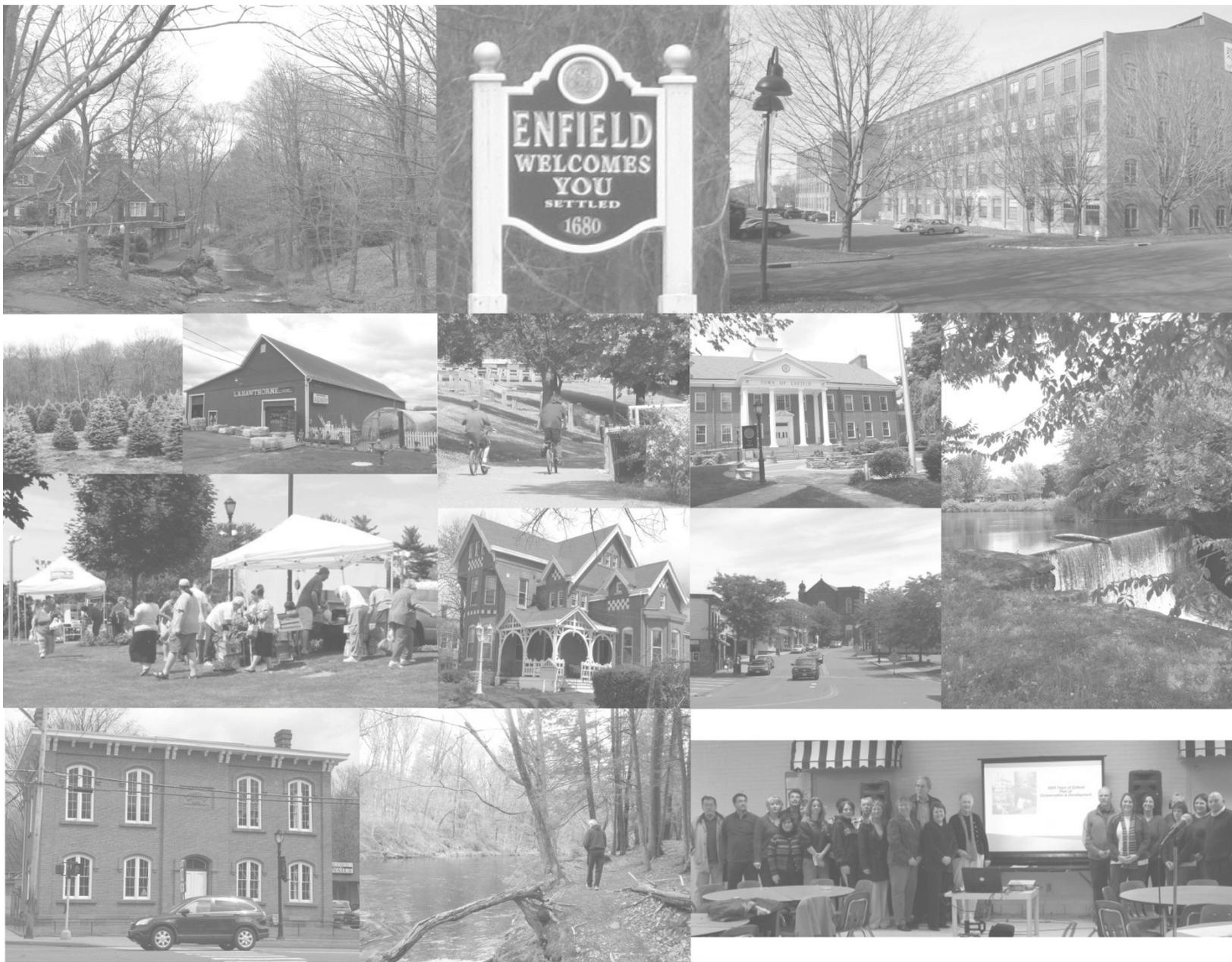
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# Plan of Conservation & Development



# Introduction

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The Town of Enfield is a community of approximately 45,000, located in North Central Connecticut, right along the border of Connecticut and Massachusetts. The Town of Longmeadow, Massachusetts defines Enfield's northern boundary, while the Connecticut River defines its western one. Enfield's eastern boundary is shared with the Town of Somers, and the southern boundary with the Towns of East Windsor and Ellington.

As required by Section 8-23 of the Connecticut General Statutes, the Town of Enfield has endeavored to update its Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) every ten years. A Plan of Conservation and Development rationalizes and substantiates a community's planning and zoning regulations, capital improvements, and future provision of public services. Regular updates are needed to ensure that the Plan remains relevant to the needs of the community as time passes and conditions change. Updates are vital because the POCD is the basis for adopting or amending municipal zoning regulations, even if the POCD itself is not legally binding on planning and zoning commissions. Also, Public Act No. 06-239 Section 3(b) makes municipalities potentially ineligible for discretionary state funding after July 10, 2010 if they don't update their POCD on a ten year cycle.<sup>1</sup>

Enfield's current POCD was completed in 1999. The update is due in 2009, but more than simply meeting a statutory requirement, the updated POCD should illustrate ten years of change and provide clear direction as the community continues to evolve. The Plan should be community-based, resulting from numerous public input activities. It should prescribe the highest and best land uses after examining:

- demographic, economic and political characteristics and trends
- housing stock and need for affordable housing
- natural environment, including its soils, topography, hydrography, plants and wildlife
- need to protect surface and underground water supplies and open space
- infrastructure capacity, including energy, waste water and solid waste management systems
- need for public services, such as public safety, health, education and recreation
- existing transportation systems and services
- existing land use patterns and zoning regulations, and
- the town's role within the region

The Plan should also outline the principles for local governance, planning and development, setting strategic targets for achieving the community's goals and objectives. Most importantly, the POCD should show the specific ways in which the Town can fulfill its vision for the future.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.ct.gov/opm/cwp/view.asp?A=2990&Q=423696](http://www.ct.gov/opm/cwp/view.asp?A=2990&Q=423696)

Once completed, POCDs can be used in many ways. Some of the ways in which the Town of Enfield should use its POCD include:

- as a **benchmark** for evaluating the compatibility of individual development proposals with the long range development objectives of the community
- as a comprehensive **source of current information** that can be used to secure state and federal funding
- as a **marketing tool** to attract business, visitors and prospective residents to Enfield
- as a **guide for open space conservation and heritage preservation**
- as a **foundation for cooperative efforts** between the town and its neighbors

Just as it will be useful for many different purposes, the POCD can also be applied by any government agency, the general public, and the private sector. The Town's Plan can be used by:

- **Town staff** to interpret legislative mandates, make administrative decisions, enforce development-related codes and prioritize work efforts
- **Planning and Zoning Commissioners** to measure the desirability of proposed developments by their conformity with the Plan
- **Elected officials** to learn about their constituents' vision for the community's future and to adopt local codes and ordinances to support those goals
- **Local residents** as a reference when making residential location choices and evaluating the effectiveness of local government
- The **Enfield Economic Development Department** and the **North Central Connecticut Chamber of Commerce**, for example, can market the town as an attractive location for business and industry; and the **Central Regional Tourism District** can use it to negotiate and advertise tourism opportunities.

The Plan's implementation actions fall specifically under the town government's jurisdiction. Many implementation actions, however, can and should be completed in collaboration with other regional and state agencies.

## Structure of the Plan of Conservation & Development

Enfield's Plan of Conservation and Development is a comprehensive document that is divided into three major parts: an inventory, a record of public input, and the actual plan. The inventory provides a thorough assessment of Enfield's resources. It documents existing conditions and trends regarding population composition, land use patterns, the natural environment, economic development and provision of public services. This description of current conditions provides a snapshot of the region at the present moment in the context of its historic and recent development, and it reveals future service needs. Many of the issues identified in the inventory are then addressed in the Plan's recommendations.

The record of public input documents the comments of the people who participated in the planning process for this POCD. Although it is included as an appendix to the Plan, it is important because the Plan is supposed to be representative of the community's aspirations. In fact, Enfield's POCD was developed to a large extent in consideration of residents' comments throughout the project.

The actual plan consists of several different components. These components and how they work together to achieve the community's goals and objectives are described in the following section.

### *Plan Components*

The POCD for the Town of Enfield is comprised of six major components:

- **The community's vision for the future** – The vision describes an end state of development. It reflects the hopes and aspirations for the future of Enfield as expressed by members of the community throughout this planning process. While the Plan itself will most likely change with every update, the vision relates to the long term future and may take more than ten years to be fulfilled.
- **Goals, objectives, policies and actions** – This section of the Plan can be thought of as a set of organizational tools the community can use to realize the vision. The goals and objectives stem directly from the comments received from participants in this planning process. They reflect community-based priorities for government efforts and investments. Policies stem from a combination of public input and a comprehensive analysis of different elements of the community, often addressing important issues that may not have emerged during the public input process, but which are needed to help the town be consistent with state laws and policies. Actions are the specific tasks that the Town could complete to implement the POCD.
- **Future Potentials** – The Future Potentials represents an inventory of opportunity and an ideal toward which the Town can strive. Many of the concepts described in the Plan can help Enfield integrate with projects underway in adjacent communities, and they can lead to employment opportunities in a variety of industries. All of the concepts have the potential to help residents lead healthier lifestyles.
- **A Future Land Use Plan** – The Future Land Use Plan is arguably the capstone of the POCD. It describes and illustrates the land use patterns that should be used to achieve the goals and objectives of the Plan. The Future Land Use Plan is the basis for the Town's zoning. It is based on a thorough review of existing zoning as well as the town's organization and built environment, and its character. The Future Land Use Plan is developed to preserve the best elements of the community's character, and enable new development to contribute to and enhance this character.
- **An Implementation Strategy** – The Implementation Strategy is the assembly of actions described previously in the Plan. They are organized according to the timeframe in which they must be completed and presented as a matrix for ease of use by local departments.

### *Different or New in 2009*

To be most effective as a living, accessible, working document, Enfield's Plan of Conservation and Development has been reorganized and reformatted in a more structured style that makes it easy to identify background information from recommendations for planning and zoning, capital improvements and supporting town policies. Furthermore, the 2009 update of Enfield's POCD systematically examines and is consistent with the State and Regional Plans of Conservation and Development.

NOTE: Please be aware that “Town” is used to refer to the town government, and “town” to refer to the geographic area known as the Town of Enfield. When the “Town of Enfield” is used, it should be possible to disambiguate the term based on its context.